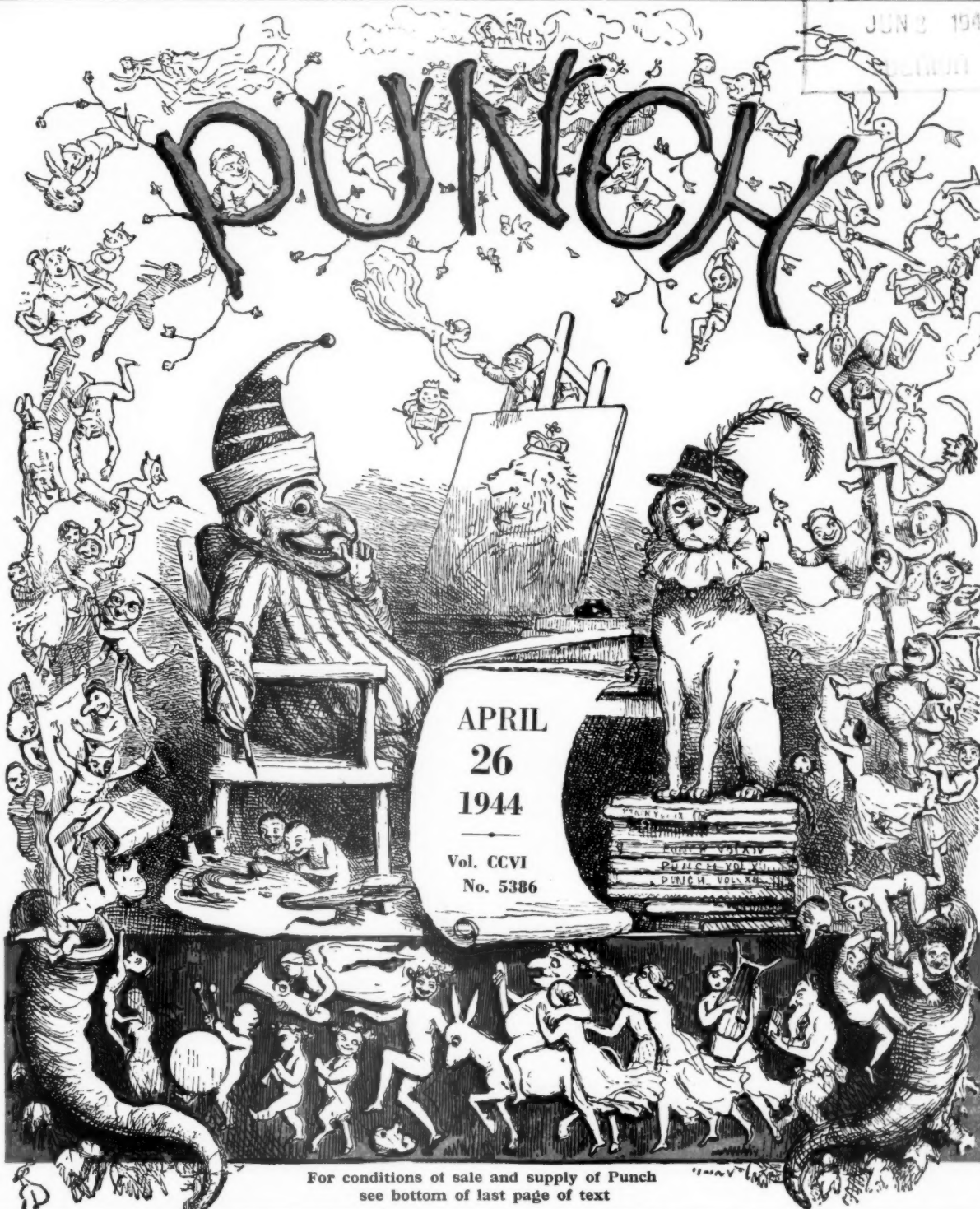


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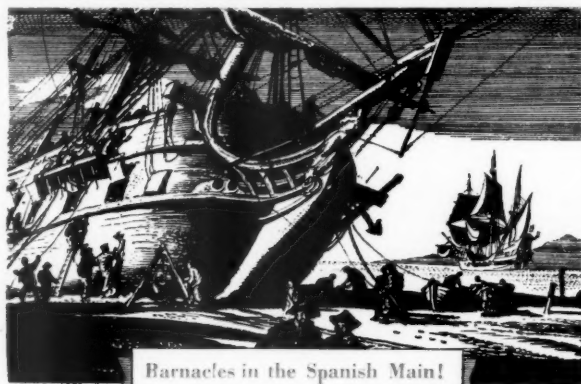
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Mr. Payle-Madder, whose sublimations on canvas are the *furor* of the advanced art world, has been delayed in the completion of his masterpiece "Regret." It was of a doorknob, two fingerstalls and a bottle of pickle. Fortunately (for us) the pickle was Pan Yan and when hunger broke in upon inspiration he consumed this portion of his model with an omelette of dried eggs. Which having finished, he was heard to murmur: "Regret be d....d!"

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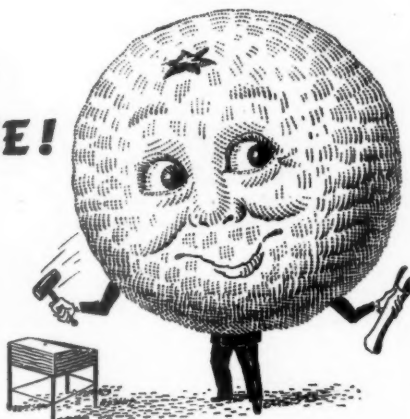
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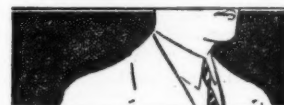
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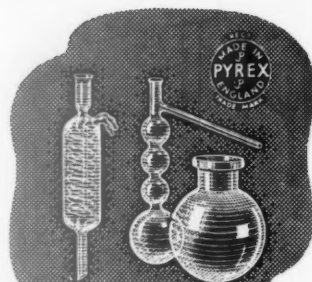


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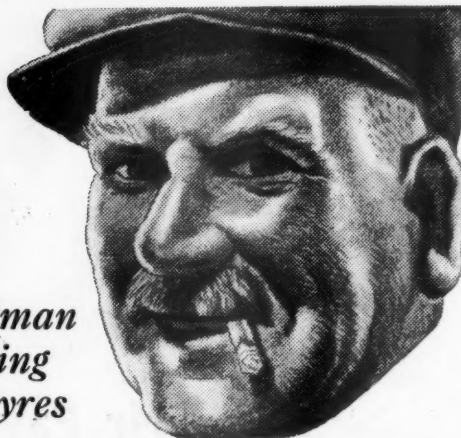
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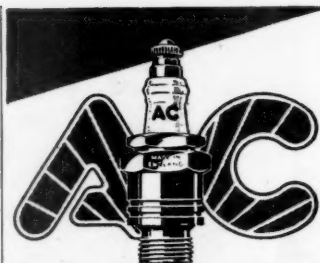
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Sigh no more, lady.
The fruits of victory will include a plentiful supply of lovely, clinging Aristoc. Meanwhile we are making the best possible war-time stockings — Aristoc Utility — and a few Raystoc and Aristile. Supplies are limited, but fair shares are distributed to all Aristoc dealers.

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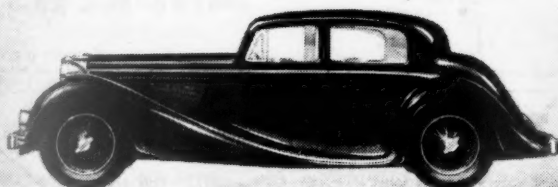
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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCVI No. 5386

April 26 1944

Charivaria

A PROVINCIAL columnist remarks that first arrivals in bus queues are often left behind. Psychologists attribute this to a reluctance to leave a long-coveted position.

The tables have turned so completely in Europe that diplomats are having a difficult time pleading with neutrals not to do anything rash.



"COUNTRY TO LET"
"Classified Advt." heading
in Scottish paper.

Guess who has applied!

A reader records having noticed a strange little fluttering insect in his wardrobe recently. Could it have been the austerity moth?

"What is the position of the Hungarian Regent?" asks a writer. We gather he is a non-operational amphibious admiral with no army either.

Apparently Goebbels has been telling the German people that they are the best subjects a leader ever had, but even he must realize that they aren't likely to be had for very much longer.

Although several conferences have been held on civil aviation, it will be some time before the world knows just how much of the air will be allotted to breathers.

"There was no hitch in the withdrawal of our transport from the Crimea," says a Nazi broadcast. And as far as the Rumanian infantry was concerned there was very little hitch-hiking.



City men are still finding it hard to believe that Mr. Montagu Norman is no longer Governor of the Bank, and many of them incline to the view that up to the moment Lord Catto must be considered by far his best disguise.

Rumour suggests that Mussolini has gone out of his mind. And after Hitler had given him nominal control of it!

It will be Chestnut Sunday shortly. Don't forget to listen in.

Sweeping alterations in train services are likely during the invasion period, but we understand that there is no truth in the rumour that one company is thinking of running the 3.50 at 3.50.



A conference has met to discuss post-war farming. It passed a resolution in favour of starting the peace-time programme with a bonfire.

In a recently-published will two brothers were left a furnished cottage and £20,000 respectively. Some people have all the luck, although no doubt the money will come in useful.

"Gunter-rigged yacht—genuine bargain at £25 complete with easily-repaired leak. Can be seen at Yacht Club."

Advt. in Nigerian paper.

Under water?

A journalist mentions that a number of ex-City clerks are among those training with the Commandos. By now they have probably become resigned to the lack of straps on the invasion barges.

"C. L. G."

IF you had chanced to see some years ago a very elderly but still very agile figure crossing Fleet Street with a trail of galley-proofs streaming behind him in the wind, you should have known that this was Charles Graves; if you had crossed a snowfall of crumpled envelopes on the floor of the Assistant Editor's room to a desk where a man sat reading at a pace almost incredible, and with a continuous flow of muttered ejaculations and pencil-marks,



typescript after typescript; or found the same man flinging new novels across the room with the shout of "Disgusting fellow!" "Abominable tripe!" until the wall was dented by the continuous impact of flying volumes, you should have known that this was Charles Graves; whose death at the age of eighty-seven was announced at the beginning of last week.

Punch never had a more loyal nor a more dili-

gent servant. His tastes in music and literature alike were severely classical, and just as he hated what he would have called obstreperous cacophony, so he could no doubt have rushed rapidly through a book like (shall we say?) *Finnegan's Wake*, correcting word after word until he had made printer's English of it. Or no; he would have hurled it across the room and deepened that dent in the wall. At a solemn church service where the prayers and hymns were printed and placed in the pews the present writer remembers asking Charles whether he thought the selections had been well made, but he only replied "Did you notice that horrible misprint on page 3?"—a disaster which seemed in his eyes to have overwhelmed all the dignity of the ceremonial. He could not have subscribed readily to Cardinal Newman's dictum that it is "very difficult to get up resentment towards persons whom one has never seen." He would rather have reversed it. "I refused to meet the fellow," he used to say of another journalist, "lest it should blunt the keen edge of my animosity," but in personal intercourse no one was more kindly and considerate.

In later years the Athenæum was almost his home, and it was hard to feel that he had not designed and built it, chosen its members, and passed for press its wines and food. He called it "The Club" and quite evidently recognized the existence of no others.

As a writer (so far as *Punch* was concerned) he had an infinite flow of nonsensical mockery in prose and verse, and he delighted in "ragging" writers, musicians, political personalities, and perhaps even more enthusiastically places and names; much of his cleverest work was done in

conjunction with E. V. Lucas, and both inside and outside *Punch* in ephemeral publications assisted by the illustrations of George Morrow. *Wisdom While You Wait*, *Signs of the Times*, and *Hustled History* enlivened the bookstalls of their day, and there stays particularly in the mind an account of Noah's anxious preparations before the Flood rendered in the manner of a popular daily newspaper, topped by the picture of a barometer on which the hand points to "SET FAIR." Perhaps it stays because of a similar account of the conditions in Europe during 1939 as seen by another no less popular daily newspaper.

Charles Graves was a fair scholar and had plenty of solid attainments; he was for a long time Assistant Editor of the *Spectator*; but even while he was in the serious chair he used to parody for *Punch* the letters which he helped to publish for earnest readers who never tired of describing the intelligent doings of their dogs and other domestic pets. He acted at various times as Assistant and Deputy Editor of *Punch*, and continuously in the former capacity from 1928 to 1936, in which year he retired. Since then he had been occupied in carrying on Mr. M. H. Spielmann's history of the paper's first fifty years up to its centenary in 1941. He completed the rather difficult task, but the publication of the book has been suspended on account of the war. He became a member of the Round Table as early as 1902, but did not contribute much in later years to the often animated discussions which decided the weekly cartoons. However firm were his private convictions he did not care to voice them (perhaps because they were so firm) in open debate.

If members of the Athenæum often remarked when he finally left London for the country "It's hard to think of the Athenæum without Charles Graves," it was certainly harder to think of 10 Bouverie Street without him; and now regretting his loss we shall still find ourselves repeating as we have so frequently since he left the office "I wonder what Charles would have said about that." His admirations were as ardent as his disapprovals. But they were all so much of a piece, and his true character was so amiable that everybody rightly regarded him almost as an institution, and certainly as a friend. E. V. K.

Story Without a Moral

THE trouble is," said the pigeon, "that every time I take a step my head jerks backwards and forwards. Look! Jerk, jerk, jerk, jerk. I tell you, Doctor, I can't stand it."

Dr. Clavicle, the eminent Harley Street consultant, pressed the tips of his long nervous fingers together and looked with interest at his unusual patient. For a moment the words "You had better go and see a vet, my good woman," trembled on his tongue, but curiosity, a certain weakness he had always had for the bizarre, restrained him.

"You find this—ah, reflex distressing?" he asked gently.

"Well, wouldn't you?" said the pigeon. "Nid-nod, nid-nod, every step you take."

"Hum!" said the doctor. "Yes, yes. No doubt. You realize of course that thousands—I may say *all* pigeons suffer from the same complaint? If you have been inclined to brood over what may perhaps seem to you an



HORSEMEN IN THE EAST



"You've heard of Flight-Lieutenant Arnold, of course—he's already shot down seven German raiders in the black-out."

embarrassing idiosyncrasy but is in fact a perfectly natural intra-muscular reaction——"

"You lot all get colds," interrupted the pigeon rather rudely, "but you don't seem to enjoy them any the more on that account. As for brooding"—and here for a moment a sort of ruffle, that might but for the feathers have been a blush, passed over her face—"I ought to have mentioned before that I'm not—not married at present."

"Quite," said Dr. Clavicle. "I see. Well, now, we must see what we can do for you. How is our general health. Good? Good. And in ourselves, our mind? No special worries, apart from this little, ah—Exactly. Sleeping all right? Taking our oats—well, no, of course; that is just a little expression we use. Taking our—our grain and so on satisfactorily? Good. Now then, just follow the tip of this pencil round with the eyes. Only the eyes, please. Try to keep the head rigid. What's that? Of course, yes. I beg your pardon. Just the right eye only then, please. Good. Thank you. Now the left. Hum! Now open the—um. Thank you. No trouble there, no trouble at all."

"It's about my head," began the pigeon impatiently.

"Exactly, yes. I'm just coming to that. Now this—er, oscillation of the head and neck of which we complain. We are not troubled by it, I take it, when at rest? Or in the air? Just so. Purely a peripatetic phenomenon."

"Eh?" said the pigeon.

"Only when walking," explained the doctor. He stepped to the window and stood for a few moments with his back to the room, deep in thought.

"Suppose we give up walking for a little while?" he suggested suddenly, wheeling round on the pigeon. "Just till we get over this. Concentrate on our flying, eh? Then perhaps later on—v-e-r-y gradually at first of course—we may be able to resume the use of our legs without distress. The neurosis will have——"

"Can't fly all the time," said his patient. "A pigeon must eat."

"In that case," said the doctor briskly, "there is only one thing to be done. We must put the neck in a splint."

It was a delicate operation, but Dr. Clavicle was used to delicate operations, and in a very few minutes the splints were in position and the bandaging neatly secured.

"There," he said, stepping back. "Is that quite comfortable?"

"No," said the pigeon. "It's hellish."

"Ah, well. A little discomfort at first perhaps until we get used to it. The strangeness will soon wear off. Now, will you walk home, or may I call a—that is, shall I open the window?"

"I'm late," said the pigeon. "I must fly. But—er, what do I—how much is the—?"

"Just leave whatever you feel inclined as you go out," said the doctor urbanely. "Good afternoon."

"Hum!" he muttered to himself a moment later, lifting a shapely white egg from the window sill in practised fingers.

"Not married, eh?" But he was not shocked. He had seen too much of the seamy side of life in the exercise of his profession to be conscious either of surprise or disapproval.

* * * * *

Two days later the pigeon reappeared, made a crash landing on the doctor's desk, picked herself up and angrily demanded her fee back.

"Tut!" said Dr. Clavicle. "I've blown it. Is anything the matter?"

"Oh, no!" cried the pigeon furiously. "Oh, no! Everything is perfectly all right. I came to you because I couldn't walk without jerking my head about. Well, it's still true, only now because I can't jerk my head about I can't walk. Any fool ought to have been able to see that that would happen. I can't even take a couple of steps. Watch."

"Steady," said Dr. Clavicle. "You're in the ink-pot. Dear me, yes. It's purely a matter of balance of course."

"Whatever it is, I won't stand it," said the pigeon. "Can't walk. Can't even bend my head down to eat. The only way I can get a mouthful is to lie on my side and scuffle round in circles. I tell you I've been the laughing-stock of Trafalgar Square."

"Well, well, that's easily remedied," said the doctor, and with a few quick, deft movements took off the splints. "How does that feel?"

"My word, what a relief!" exclaimed the pigeon, and she took a few quick steps up and down the desk, her head going to and fro like anything. "Lovely to be able to walk about again. Always was fond of walking—from the egg, as you might say."

"No discomfort?"

"Discomfort!" repeated the pigeon. "Not now you've taken that frightful contraption of yours off."

"Splendid!" said Dr. Clavicle. "A most satisfactory cure."

"Cured?" said the pigeon thoughtfully. "Why, yes—I suppose I am cured. What an amazing thing!"

"Nothing amazing about it. A perfectly straightforward case. If we become conscious, too conscious, of some perfectly normal function, operation, reaction or what-you-will of our bodies, there is always a danger that it may become a worry to us. We brood on it. In the end it may cloud the whole mind and even in extreme cases unseat the reason. A famous judge, as you may have heard, became so conscious during long hours in court of the workings of his internal organs, heart, liver and so on, that he was compelled in the end to leave the

Bench. I have known hundreds of cases. And the remedy, my dear madam—"

"Miss," said the pigeon.

"—the remedy is to deny that operation to us for a while, to stifle it, so that very soon we long to have it back. We realize it is necessary to us. Instead of being a nuisance it becomes—"

"You could hardly do that to the judge's liver," interrupted the pigeon. "However, I see what you mean. It may happen with quite ordinary habits, I suppose, of which one is normally unconscious, such as putting the tips of your fingers together?"

"Putting the tips—? Hum!" said the doctor, thrusting his hands into his trouser pockets.

"Don't let it worry you," said the pigeon kindly.

"Worry me, my dear madam!" pushed the doctor. "We medical men are hardly likely—"

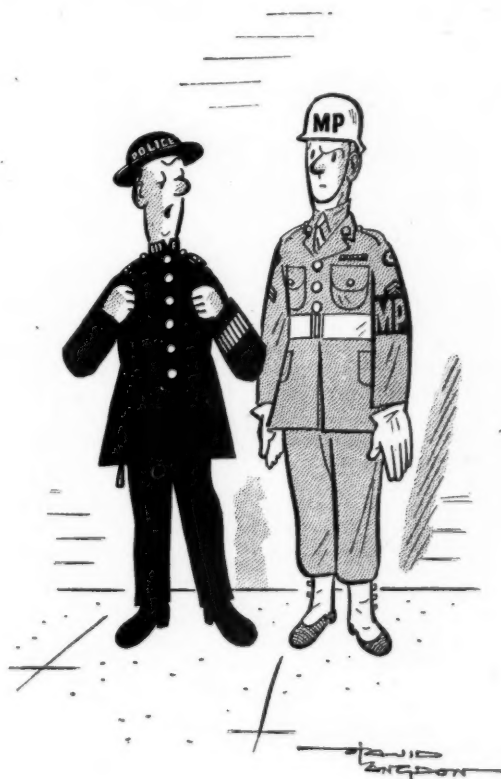
"They're together again now, you know."

"Tchah!" said Dr. Clavicle.

"If you do find the habit getting on your mind at all," said the pigeon cheerfully, "just lash your hands together behind your back for a day or two. You can easily rest your head on the plate when you're eating. And now I really must be going. No, please don't trouble. I'll walk."

"Nid-nod, nid-nod," cried the doctor fiercely after her retreating figure. "I don't know how you can stand it."

H. F. E.



"Yes, some of our chaps wore white gloves pre-war, AND white helmets in some parts, AND I'm not sure that the old Bow Street runners didn't wear white spats with their top hats."

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

At the Pictures

FRENCH AND BRITISH

THERE is no doubt that *Le Jour se Lève* (Director: MARCEL CARNÉ) is the one to pick out first from the fortnight's pile of new films, the only trouble being that probably comparatively few of you will get a chance to see it. I don't understand how it is that these "pre-Occupation" French films can keep turning up, but very welcome indeed they are. A minor quality in French pictures the value of which one sometimes tends to forget—minor, I mean, compared with the great merits of character, atmosphere and visual composition—is the way they maintain continuous interest, no matter how little may be actually happening on the screen; and here, where the "frame" of the story is a man alone in his room (the narrative is told in flash-backs), this is particularly evident. The man, *François* (JEAN GABIN), walks about his room, moves a few things, lies on the bed, looks out of the window, chain-smokes . . . and one is genuinely interested in him all the time, one examines his tiniest action with curiosity and pleasure (remembering afterwards that there exist directors who contrive to be boring even when they use fifteen characters in a motor-car chase crackling with revolver-shots).

François has murdered a man; the film begins as he does it, goes on to give his memories of what led to the murder, and ends as he shoots himself. Hopeless to try to explain to those of you who are immediately repelled by the thought of such a story that skilful direction and design and admirable acting have made it a keen pleasure to watch; but perhaps the much smaller proportion of filmgoers who care to take in more than the "story"

and the personalities of the leading players, and who understand that the stimulant or depressive effect left by a film depends on the way it is done rather than on the presence or absence of a "happy ending," may be willing

audience at the British film *The Halfway House* (Director: BASIL DEARDEN) suggested another possible reason for the popularity of the under-one-roof or all-in-the-same-boat kind of story: it is thought to be of its very nature clever. "The Halfway House" is the name of a Welsh country pub at which the characters meet; the film begins by introducing each in turn, naming in subtitles the places where we see them, and simply running them off in rotation. A voice near me as the fourth or fifth of these preliminary episodes began: "Oh, I see, they all meet—jolly good, isn't it?" There you are: you can please people by merely thinking up reasons why a group of characters should be in the same place at the same time.

The film is an unsatisfactory mixture of the conventions of supernatural melodrama with the conventions of farce, though it has many good points. The point about this inn is that it was burned down in a raid and reappears supernaturally, complete with revived landlord and

daughter, so that the other characters may solve their spiritual problems under its roof. Now the sight of people gradually discovering, from various hints, a fact already known to the audience is, for some reason, essentially comic: it cannot be made an eerie effect. We cannot help laughing as these people find last year's calendar and last year's papers and hear last year's radio news; and laughter doesn't fit with the melodramatics of some of the other dialogue. There is attractive playing here, by MERVYN and GLYNIS JOHNS and the young girl SALLY ANN HOWES and others; but the mixture won't do.

Another British film well worth seeing is, surprisingly, *On Approval* (Director: CLIVE BROOK). Surprisingly, because the very idea of a British film version of an old



[The Halfway House]

ANOTHER DRIVING CONTROVERSY

Capt. Meadows TOM WALLS
Mrs. Meadows FRANÇOISE ROSAY

to believe this. The other first-rate principal players are JULES BERRY, perfect in the part of the man who is murdered, a flashily smart, hypnotic, emotional personality who fascinates and repels; and JACQUELINE LAURENT and ABLETTY.

A remark I overheard in the



REVERIE

François JEAN GABIN

Frederick Lonsdale stage comedy is calculated to depress, and we have known nothing of CLIVE BROOK as a producer and director before. But he proves to have ideas: *On Approval* being a dated artificial comedy, he dates it even more emphatically by putting it into the Edwardian period, and makes it much more and much more entertainingly artificial than it was. The result is a real success, extremely amusing: the four principals—Mr. BROOK himself, BEATRICE LILLIE, ROLAND CULVER and GOOGIE WITHERS—play it light-heartedly as nonsense, and there are several very funny and effective moments when the characters exchange a word with the unseen commentator. I enjoyed this.

R. M.

Forces' Choice

EACH week in this column I am answering requests from the more deadly serious-minded of H. M. Forces overseas. If you have any requests (other than for musical items) send them—on postal orders, please—to me. Mark your envelopes "Rather Private."

My first paragraph is for Private Bert Willis, Corporal Ted Mosstich, "Four Desert Rats" and Wren Molly Winstanly. They all ask for a restatement of the Theorem of Pythagoras. Here goes: In any right-angled triangle worthy of the name the square on the sloping side or . . . By the way, Corporal Ted sends greetings to his girl Pamela and hopes that his request will remind her of many happy days in Boscombe Park.

Next comes a request for "a bit of sociology" from "Eight Jolly Merchant Seamen," General Sir Wilmot Powyer and "Lonely" (Madagascar). I have chosen a paragraph from Wallace and Cynthia Shenstone's *The Intelligent Man's Guide to Poverty and Malnutrition*: "Mona threw back her fine head of hair as if playing for time. With a gesture of impatience she snatched at the black-out curtains and made a gap perhaps no more than one inch wide. Through it she saw the bright disc of . . . no, it couldn't be . . . yes, yes, the bright disc of the town hall clock. What did it mean? Could the repairs to her radio have taken so long? She wondered . . ."

And now for the high spot of the column—an account of the geological structure of Bristowe-on-Trent for Gunners Trevelyan, Hooper, Corbishley and Chubb, "Five in a Mess"

THE ALL-TOO-SWIFTLY CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

THE CHARMING LITTLE PLACE FOR LUNCH



1



2

(Reykjavik) and Sapper Monavista Mogaguella.

"The Mercian trend of the Trias is resumed near Bristowe so that the one-inch survey map seems to reproduce very accurately the markings of Nettlefold, winner of the 1889 Oaks Selling Plate. The map on page 127 should be studded with small farms . . ." (*Our Rocks—An Outdoor Book*).

Smart Work

"Mr. Martin arrived alone, but his followers had preceded him."—*Canadian paper*.

Another Africa Star

"He is a brilliant chess player and has played with some of the world's best players, including Cassablanca . . ." *Northern paper*.



"H'm, seven. And there should be how many you say—sixty-four?"

Cycle

FAIR foolish thoughts that flock fondly the mind,
 Dearer than dreams, as wanton as a shadow,
 And as remote as midnight's darling stars!
 And as dreams do in sleep, they tease us thus,
 Thuswise chase, clasp, and close-encircle us,
 Until we find
 (Beyond the spectre and the substance of wars)
 The lost forest and the remembered meadow.

Each mind has its own road that travels back
 Easily over the years—at a laugh, or a word,
 Or a glance tossed us from familiar eyes
 In a strange face—
 Seaward or shoreward, homeward or wanderward,
 Whether it be a lost untrodden track
 To some green country place,
 Or unmapped like the far flight of a bird—
 So a man may stand
 And say, remembering,
 "Here I held happiness in the cup of my hand."

Fair foolish thoughts, fair foolish memories—
 But O, their sorcery lies not in the past;
 For it is these
 That are the lovely messengers of peace:
 They are faith for the future and a star for the
 steadfast.

M. E. R.

Tea

HOW many of my readers have ever paused half-way through a cup of tea to reflect that life would not be what it is, whatever it is, if there were no tea in it? The answer is, briefly, all of them. Tea has built its reputation on this sort of thing. So let us to-day think of some of the aspects and characteristics of tea and its drinkers.

The origins of tea-drinking in this country are obscure to all but those who happen to have just looked it up in an encyclopædia, but most people would agree that it was probably brought here with everything else by Sir Walter Raleigh or, if not then, some other time. I think this is all we need to know about tea in olden days. Present-day tea is really what I want to talk about. Present-day tea is sold in packets which are very interesting to the student of sociology, because they are all, no matter what the tea inside, done up in the same way—folded in four points each end and stuck down with a round label. To open this packet the tea-user has to get under one of the points and follow it through the label, and although there is no real top or bottom to a tea-packet most people are so well-drilled by tins and bottles that they will spend a few preliminary seconds reading the print on the packet to see they have it the right way up. The print on a tea-packet is a bit inclined to be sober; it does not promise that the tea-drinker will be made healthier or more beautiful, but it does sometimes mention that this particular tea is aromatic, or blended, or something to bring subconscious comfort to the well-drilled. After the packet is open the tea is usually put in a tea-caddy, or hereditary tin which no one bought but someone must have. Of course there are and always will be people who keep their tea in glass jars or even pale-green tins marked "Tea," but then some people will do anything to be different.

To make tea you put some tea in a warm teapot and pour boiling water on it. This is an easy enough process. In fact it is too easy. It is inconsistent with life's obstacles. Mankind has therefore sought to make it difficult by encouraging experts, or naggers, to come forward with their theories. These experts do their job by taking the old formula—it is significant that even they could find no other—and italicizing a word here and there. To make tea, they state, you put some tea in a *warm* teapot and pour *boiling* water on it. This expert advice is ever-present in tea-makers' minds. It does not worry them when alone, but it is just enough to undermine their confidence if asked to make tea in other people's houses, when they are apt to wonder if they ought to put the teapot in the oven first. There is, however, a convention that errors in tea-making are expiated by the tea-makers repeating a few phrases of under-apology while pouring out the first cup—phrases which do not interrupt the general conversation but are known to ward off evil spirits.

Tea-making, then, is in practice, which is to say in theory, a simple process. What really happens is this. Whoever is making the tea puts the kettle on and after watching it for a few seconds realizes that eternity is all it is made out to be, and seeks distraction in the nearest scrap of newspaper or cookery-book. I am assuming that the kettle has not been put on beforehand and left to boil while the tea-maker does something else, when of course it is the swift passage of time which proves to be what it is made out to be. To go back to the tea-maker who does it all in one, the next stage, after mentally noting that there is more in cookery-books than you would think



"Yes, Utility's quite all right, but Period seems to last longer."

without reading them, is to get the tea-caddy and wash up the teapot. This is not a satisfactory process; it leaves round the bottom of the inside of the pot a shallow rim of water and a few bloated tea-leaves. However. The tea-maker now pours some of the water from the kettle into the pot and out into the sink, thus rendering the pot theoretically warm. The tea is put into the teapot with a special spoon, wide, flat and of a curious dull brassy texture, with an ornate handle. The amount of tea which goes in used to be matter for experts and to depend on the number of people about to drink it, but nowadays it does not depend on anything except the public spirit of the tea-maker. This having been done, the tea-maker notices that the kettle is not nearly boiling and realizes that the pot will be cold by the time it is, if anything so subconscious can be called a realization. The tea-maker now collects on a tray the cups and saucers and so on, getting quite enthusiastic and stopping only when the kettle lid rattles to indicate that the water is boiling. It now only remains to fill up the teapot and as much of the water-jug as there is water for and carry the tray into the appropriate room for the tea-maker to have earned a quite disproportionate burst of gratitude, together with exemption from being the one to go and fetch the milk-jug.

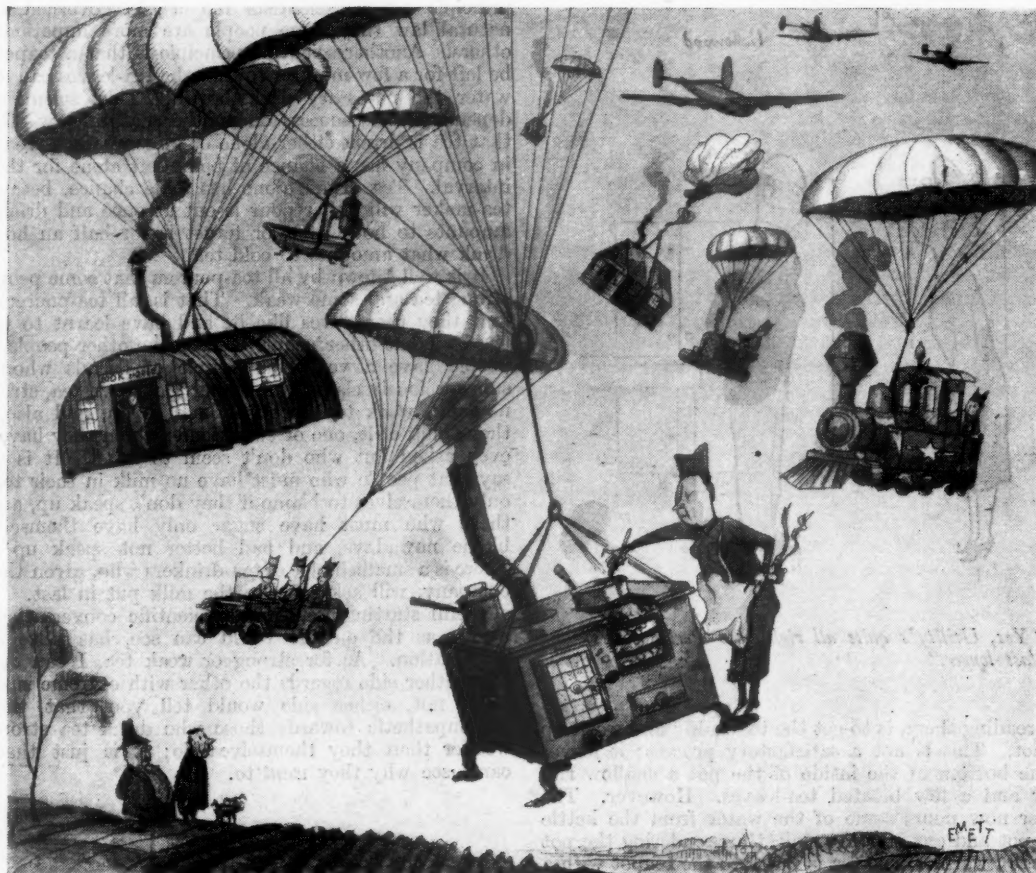
A few words on teapots. They may be any shape and made of almost anything, but experts have pronounced that a brown earthenware pot gives the best results. Mankind translates this into the sort of chocolate-coloured teapot which, if it did not originally buy because it had to, it is not likely to buy now unless it does. The non-possession of a brown earthenware adds further to tea-makers' sense of guilt, which all helps. All teapots (except silver ones, whose lids are hinged as valuable books are chained up) have detachable lids which can fall at will—their own, not the tea-pourer's—inside the pot; and all teapots, especially silver ones, will sometimes pour out of

the lid instead of the spout. This is a well-known scientific principle which, scientists tell us, is governed by the natural law that some people are more impatient than others. Another scientific principle is that a teapot must be left for a few minutes so that the tea-leaves can dye the water the necessary dark brown. This, scientists say, depends for its success on another natural law—the fact that tea is drunk either alone or in company. Tea drunk in company has a chance of being left alone for the right interval. Tea drunk alone has little chance, because the tea-maker will either pour it out at once and drink what amounts to hot water, or forget it for half an hour and drink what amounts to cold tea.

It is well known by all tea-pourers that some people like strong tea and some weak. That is, all tea-pourers know how they themselves like it, and have learnt to tolerate the fact that other people behave like other people. Most people have a very small circle of friends whom they subconsciously classify as strong tea, weak tea, strong tea no milk, weak tea no sugar, and so on, and also, when they think of it, one or two friends whom they have never even asked but who don't seem to mind. It is safe to say that people who must have no milk in their tea have only themselves to blame if they don't speak up, and that those who must have sugar only have themselves to blame nowadays, and had better not speak up either. There is a smallish bloc of tea-drinkers who, given the right company, will ask to have the milk put in last. This is a useful starting-point for a scientific conversation, but, as far as the outside world can see, has little further justification. As for strong or weak tea, I can only say that either side regards the other with extreme suspicion. It is not, either side would tell you, that they are unsympathetic towards those who drink tea stronger or weaker than they themselves do; it is just that they can't see why they *want* to.



"Why shouldn't he sit there? Anyone would think you had caught the rabbit."

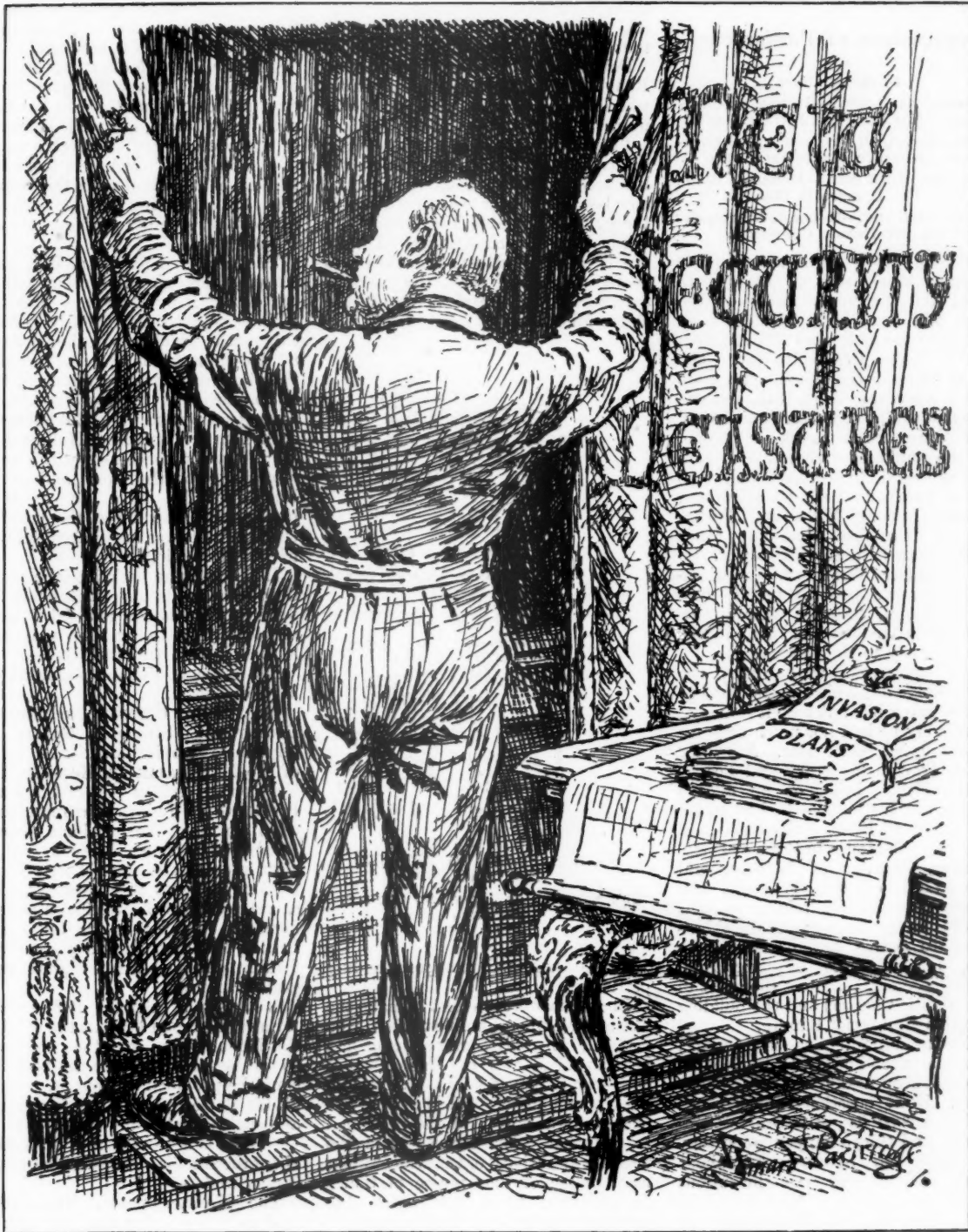


"Ah, yes—I heard the Americans were going to start a camp hereabouts."

The Housewife

THER was a wyf fro Stratford-atte-Bowe,
And, soth to seyn, she nas nat undergrowe,
But was a wyf ful fat and in good point;
Ful merrilye she wolde seke hir joint
On Saturdaye, and stonden in a queue
If that the shopman solde o thing newe,
As fishe, or saucissons, or wastel breed.
Up-on the kitchne front was al hir heed,
For she wolde out of litel maken muche,
Costard and blankmanger and other suche,
Thogh that of mylk she hadde but a gil;
In makyng bake-metes was al hir skil.
At even by the hearthe wolde she sitte,
And softly stitchen by the houre, or knitte,

Or sewen gounes, if they were torn or shente;
Hir coupons were wel lesser than hir rente,
And yet methought hir rente was but smal.
She wered for the nonce an over-al;
Up-on hir wriste heng a lite maille
Ther-in she bar hir pointes for vitaille;
And on hir heed she hadde a coverchef.
But scathe it was that she was somdel def,
For she hadde herd the bombes whistlen
doun
Ful ofte about hir wonyng in the toun.
But thogh that she was povre, she was
rich:
Smith was hir name, or Jones; I noot nat which.



DOUBLY SURE

"I feel it's about time I made the black-out more complete."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, April 18th.—House of Commons: *Not the First Sitting Day!*

Wednesday, April 19th.—House of Commons: *Absence Makes the Heart ...*

Thursday, April 20th.—House of Commons: *The Empire is Floodlit.*

Friday, April 21st.—House of Commons: *The Empire Debate Continues.*

Tuesday, April 18th.—None of the unhappy inhabitants of Europe, to whom the victorious forces of the Allies may soon bring freedom from slavery, could look more relieved than did the Great Elected to-day. For to-day was—for the first time for more than three years—April 18th, and not “the first sitting day after April 16th.”

The difference may seem a small one, but the roundabout rigmarole (which was supposed to confuse only the enemy) had caused more half-amused irritation among M.P.s and Parliamentary journalists than any other of the minor irritants of this war. So Sir HERBERT WILLIAMS, to whose pertinacity we perhaps mainly owe this Freedom, beamed with a new cheerfulness, and even had a kind word or two to say to the Government.

Mr. CHURCHILL, whose baby the “first sitting day” idea was, seemed to feel the loss a bit, but bore it bravely.

Probably he had not much time for private grief, since—Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House, being on an alleged holiday in the country—he had added the offices of Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House to those of Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and First Lord of the Treasury. An infinite capacity for taking on new jobs has always been one of the P.M.'s claims to genius, and he seemed to revel in his piece of “territorial aggrandisement” (against the spirit of the Atlantic Charter) and the building up of his Ministerial Empire.

Mr. CHURCHILL is not (so to speak) particularly fond of Mr. R. R. STOKES, who *will* keep asking questions about tanks. Now, questions about tanks are like a Nazi flag to a British Commando, and things happen when they are asked. Mr. STOKES asked about tanks to-day, and was incautious enough to suggest that Mr. CHURCHILL was “afraid” to let M.P.s compare the respective merits of different types.

Mr. CHURCHILL's eyes gleamed. Mr. Speaker sharply told Mr. STOKES that he must not make imputations, where-upon he amended his question and asked whether comparison of various

tanks would not make Members realize the “untruthfulness” of statements that had been made.

Delightedly cheered by Mr. BRENDAN BRACKEN, the Minister of Information, who loves a fight, Mr. CHURCHILL was up in an instant.

“Since,” said he, with honeyed acidity, “the word ‘untruthfulness’ has been used, let me say that no one has been a greater contributor to it than the honourable Member!”

Blushing, Mr. STOKES waited while the cheers died down, and then was heard to claim that the soldiers agreed with him and not with the Prime Minister.



BALBUS PLANS TO REBUILD HIS WALL.

THE MINISTER OF TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

Mr. CHURCHILL did not seem unduly perturbed.

In a praiseworthy effort to make the words of Members audible to those who listened, an extra microphone had been installed over the Table, and it occasionally played tricks, producing a duet or round-song effect when but one voice was in use. Ministers seemed to say that “The answer is in the negative-negative,” or that they “must have notice of that notice of that.” As abruptly as it had come, the ghostly phenomenon died away, and all was normal once more.

Someone ought to write a Parliamentary dictionary. The word “shortly” bears some hundreds of different meanings, used (as Mrs. Beeton would say) according to taste.

Sometimes it means within an æon or two, sometimes a few minutes, sometimes something in between. Mr. “SHAKESPEARE” MORRISON, Minister of Town and Country Planning, whose capacity for original thought has been noted here before, gave this definition of the word to-day: “Shortly means in a short time.” Members looked on this novel definition with the respect due to something unique; clearly nobody had seen the word quite in this light before.

The House defeated a Bill, gaily trooping through the division lobbies to “down” it by 111 votes. Members plainly enjoyed the slightly sadistic experience, which was in the nature of a “live-ammunition exercise,” since no threat of a subsequent compulsory vote of confidence in the Government lay in the background. The Bill happened to be a private one, from Hull, seeking some powers concerned with reconstruction of bombed areas, and private Bills normally have an existence beside which the life of the youthful Oliver Twist was unadulterated joy, frivolity and mirth.

Members came back into the House from the division metaphorically dusting their hands and (also metaphorically) muttering “Let that be a lesson to you, you little beast!”

Not a single Minister scribbled out his resignation.

Mr. ROBERT CARY ushered into the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery the impressive tropical-khaki-clad figure of the MAHARAJAH OF KASHMIR and the slender civilian one of Sir FIROZ KHAN NOON, India's two representatives to the War Cabinet, newly arrived in Britain. They looked on with interest, and were shortly joined by Mr. EDWARD STETTINIUS, Under-Secretary of the United States Department of State, over for talks with British Ministers on the present and future. *He* looked on with even greater interest.

Wednesday, April 19th.—Rear-Admiral BEAMISH fair put the wind up the House when, told that the mails to the Royal Navy were the best that could be provided at present, he took off his glasses, planted his feet firmly, and spoke sepulchraly thus:

“There is a great deal of discontent about these mails. Unless it is improved it may well—”

The Minister paled. The House held its collective breath. Mr. Speaker and the very Clerks-at-the-Table seemed fascinated. The Admiral went on:

“—swell into a grievance!”

Scarcely had the reaction (to use a neutral word) to this anti-climax died



"Now, suppose this roast boar is the bill above Sarum, then these dormice in honey are the tenth legion and these nightingales' tongues are the Britons."

ere Mr. JAMES MAXTON fired this one at Mr. NOEL-BAKER, of the Ministry of War Transport: "The road-bridge over the Forth near Queensferry has been under consideration for fifty years. Have not high hopes been aroused in Scotland that . . . greater progress will be made in the next fifty years?"

Perhaps A. Hitler's *Luftwaffe*, which had noisily visited London during the night, was responsible for the decidedly thin attendance, but a score of questions were passed over in succession because the questioners were absent. Then someone sought to ask a question of Sir DONALD SOMERVELL, the Attorney-General—and he was not there.

So they passed on to Captain WATERHOUSE, of the Board of Trade, who was not there either. Soon afterwards the Captain appeared, hot and bothered, was cheered ironically, and retorted by apologizing most pointedly to Mr. Speaker alone.

A small boy in the gallery seemed about to leap over the safety-rail in his eagerness to hear the reply to a

query addressed to Colonel LLEWELIN, the Food Minister. It was whether ice cream would be allowed this summer. The small boy joined in the general sigh of regret when the Minister held out no—or almost no—hope.

Continuing the chastening of Ministers which seemed to be the order of the day, Mr. AUSTIN HOPKINSON addressed Sir ANDREW DUNCAN, the Minister of Supply, thus:

"Would it not be very injurious if the enemy were to get to know the full depth of the incompetence of the Minister of Supply?"

Sir ANDREW (who had just pleaded "the public interest" as a justification for secrecy) was not amused—but others were, quite.

There was a to-do about the Government's order against unofficial strikes, and its penalty of five years penal servitude, with a £500 fine, for offenders. Labour and other Members asked tricky questions, and the House sorely missed the urbane helpfulness of Mr. EDEN, its Leader, who was taking a so-called holiday in the country. Everybody got tied in knots, and

more will be heard of the matter anon. There followed a learned discussion on science and things, which apparently arose out of the Civil Estimates.

Thursday, April 20th.—Mr. SHINWELL out-empired the greatest Empire enthusiasts on the other side by moving a resolution urging unity of the Empire in peace as in war. He was rewarded by the rapt attention of Mr. CHURCHILL, who sat throughout the speech—a rare honour in these hectic days.

Mr. SHINWELL's line was that the British Empire was about the best and most stable thing in the world to-day, and that the more we were together the merrier we—and the rest of mankind—would be.

The debate which followed took pretty much the same line, with a grouse or two here and there. And on

Friday, April 21st, Mr. CHURCHILL wound up the debate saying a loud if at times rather puzzled amen to almost everything Mr. SHINWELL had said. It was most impressive, this unity, and only communist Mr. GALLACHER seemed to have any serious qualms about it.



"If we promise to be very good while you're out, Mummy, may we ring up the Wardens and ask them to come and test our gas-masks?"

Classics in Basic

THE following exercises were not unkindly or ludicrously undertaken. We are well aware that Basic English is not intended for rhetorical or poetical use. Nevertheless, anyone who wants to learn Basic English will find it highly instructive to try to translate old favourite phrases into Basic, because he will then see quickly the kind of thing that can and cannot be done with it. He will be especially surprised and disconcerted by the number of good words he can't find among the eight hundred and fifty—"God", for example, "king", "must", "brave", "soon", "shall", "war", "enemy", etc. We, for our part, though we know what the authors are after and respect their efforts, still think that the vocabulary should be much, much larger.

An expert, no doubt, would have done these exercises better. But we have done our best: we are learners—and it takes some learning.

To be or not to be—that is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles

And, by opposing, end them?

To be or not to be—that is the question,
If it is better in the mind to undergo
The stone-sending cords and sharp-pointed
air-going instruments of unkind chance,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And, by standing in the way, put an end
to them?

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to
fortune . . .

There is, so to say, a regular sea-current
in the things of men

Which, taken when it goes to the land,
leads on to good business . . .

Never, in the history of human conflict, was so much owed by so many to so few.

Never, in the history of men's disagreement, did such great numbers have so great a debt to such small numbers.

They have banged and bolted the door.

They have made the door shut with a great sound and they have put into the right hole the piece of iron which keeps it shut.

On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined.

On with physical amusement, using music and rhythm! Let pleasure be unlimited.

Good King Wenceslas looked out

On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even.

*The Good Ruler Wenceslas took a look out
On the name-day of Stephen
When the snow was put round about
Deep and stiff to the touch and level.*

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered.

*Let the Highest Authority get up, and
let those in disagreement with him be
sent in all directions.*

Charity begins at home.

*It is necessary for the first examples of
a tendency to give freely to be seen in the
house of the one who has it.*

Fear God—Honour the King.

*Have fear of the ruler of the sky.
Give honour to the ruler of the land.*

Thou shalt do no murder.

You will not put any man to death.

And yet you continually stand on your head—

Pray what is the reason of that?

*And yet as a rule you put yourself
upright on your head.*

*If you please, what is the reason of
that?*

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then

Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and
bright

The lamps shone o'er fair women
and brave men,

A thousand hearts beat happily; and
when

Music arose with its voluptuous
swell,

Soft eyes looked love to eyes which
spake again,

And all went merry as a marriage
bell;

But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes
like a rising knell!

*There was a sound of amusement by
night,*

*And Belgium's chief town had got
together then*

*Her beauty and her horse-men and
The lighting apparatus gave a bright
look to pleasing women and men
without fear.*

*Ten hundred hearts kept moving up and
down happily; and when*

*Music got up with its pleasure-causing
increase,*

*Not hard eyes looked love to eyes which
said things again,*

*And all went with as much laughing
as the bell of a church at which a
man and a woman are being joined
together.**

* Sorry—it's the best we can do.

*But make no noise, make use of your
ears, a deep sound gives a blow
like a death-sign coming up.*

I never read a book before reviewing
it: it prejudices a man so.

*I never have a reading of a book
before writing publicly my opinion of it.
It makes a man make up his mind
beforehand.*

Drink to me only with thine eyes

And I will pledge with mine;

Or leave a kiss within the cup

And I'll not look for wine.

*Do your drinking to me only with your
eyes*

*And I will give an undertaking with
mine;*

*Or put a kiss inside the cup and let it
stop there*

And I will not go after wine.

The Minstrel Boy to the war is gone,
In the ranks of death you'll find him:

His father's sword he has girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him.

*The music-making boy to the place of
fighting has gone,*

*In the ordered lines of death you will
come to him:*

*His father's sharp fighting-arm he has
put at his side with a cord*

*And his uncontrolled instrument of
music at his back with another.*

She is far from the land where her
young hero sleeps

And lovers are round her, sighing:

AN Officer in charge of a Com-
forts Depot to whom we
have been able to send supplies
of our wool writes:

"In a letter it is difficult for
me adequately to express my
gratitude for the valuable help
you give us, thus enabling
further supplies of knitted com-
forts to be dispatched to the
soldiers overseas.

"I wish I were in the position
to be able to thank personally all
the supporters of your Fund, for
I am most grateful for this aid to
our work."

We also tender our thanks to
all Subscribers, and in doing so
beg them to continue their most
valuable help by sending Dona-
tions which will be gratefully
received and acknowledged by
Mr. Punch at PUNCH COM-
FORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St.,
London, E.C.4.

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

But coldly she turns from their gaze,
and weeps,

For her heart in his grave is lying.

*She is far from the land where her young
man of special quality is sleeping,
And lovers are round her, taking deep
breaths with a sad sound;*

*But coldly she makes a turn away from
their long fixed looks, and makes
her eyes wet,*

*For her heart has been put on the
floor of his death-place.*

A. P. H.

Day Out

RIGHT from the moment of its
breaking

I knew it was going to be grand,
And it turned out record-making—

Weather to beat the band,

Breeze enough to keep you moving

And a sun that was a sun,

And me on leave for the twenty-four
hours of it;

Wasn't that fun!

Somewhere, winter-neglected,

The poor old bicycle lay;

Could it be resurrected?

It could and it was . . . O.K.!

Air and oil and we were ready,

Ready for the road once more,

Ready for our first day in the country
In nineteen-forty-four.

Quixote on Rosinante!

I dare say we looked a sight—

Me pedalling away *andante*

And wobbling left and right;

Me blowing like a grampus

And the bike rattling like a train,

But—we made the old, the remembered
places,

The happy places again.

Skylarks were out and doing,

Butterflies on the wing,

The plovers dancing, the pigeons
cooing,

And the curtain up on Spring;

Same old scenery and chorus

Putting on the same old show,

But—there isn't a show in the world
to beat it,

Not that I know.

Tell me the future's chequered,

Tell me of toil and tears;

Here's something I'll write in the
record

Of my war years;

"Let the sky lighten or darken,

Let the fortune soar or sag,

I'm one up on you this time, Hitler—
This day's in the bag!" H. B.

At the Play

"MEET ME VICTORIA" (VICTORIA PALACE)

HERE, once more, are Mr. LUPINO LANE and his girl. He has become a porter at Victoria, by name *Bill Fish*. She is called *Dot Hawkins*, and wheels a refreshment trolley. In Scene One he woos her, between trains, with Mr. NOEL GAY's song "You're a Nice Little Baggage." In Scene Twelve he repeats it, and wins her for a second time. By now he has grown to a station-master and, for the sake of symmetry, the station-master of Scene One has dwindled to a porter. How exactly *Bill* soars to this pinnacle is the authors' secret. The plot is less memorable than the sight of Mr. LANE sitting in some discomfort on a hot iron, Mr. LANE in torment with a woman who will not understand plain English (what else can "pig's ear" mean?), and Mr. LANE lunching frugally in a Pullman car at high speed or—attired at this stage in a suit of rainbow pyjamas and a crushed grey bowler—netting the crooks in the bridal suite of the Hotel Southern. Why crooks? Why bridal suite? It does not matter, for the plot is merely the vexation of a dream, a Cockney harlequinade in which the action is fantasy unashamed. A blonde policewoman strolls across the stage solely for *Bill* to observe "It's a fair cop." If a man is knocked down he must be knocked through the floor. When *Bill* exclaims "What's that?" to a radio set, the radio at once replies.

So it goes on. Little in the evening (except Victoria itself) is stationary. Between its point of departure and its terminus—both of them Victoria "under the clock"—the piece encircles some Never-Never Land of its own, Mr. LANE always in firm control. He is an expert clown, as much a part of London as Aldgate Pump or the pigeons of Trafalgar Square. This neo-Victorian entertainment, with its cheerful Noel Gay music, is only another frame for his portrait of the eternal Cockney. He never becomes strident: there is something Chaplinesque about the subdued yet alert little man who

can flash suddenly to extravagantly comic slapstick, to the fringe of pathos, and back to quicksilver fooling. Although he could have better material than this—the second half of the evening falters—he has rarely offered anything more happily preposterous than that lunch-party with the Strong Woman (and *Private Lord Fitz-Murgatroyd* thrown in) in a racing, jolting Pullman to Brighton.

Miss PHYLLIS ROBINS, whose performance is in the same key, is, as it were, this *Bill's* inevitable receipt; Miss DOROTHY WARD is a towering

Miss FLORA ROBSON's return to the London stage after an absence of five years, gave uncommon excitement to the first night of *Guilty*, the latest version of ZOLA's *Thérèse Raquin*. Although, in this adaptation by Miss KATHLEEN BOUTALL, the early atmosphere of the *Raquins'* home is less suffocating than it used to be, the play retains its uncomfortable power: its fourth act has the grinding insistence of a dental drill.

The tale is familiar. Macbeth and his Queen of Scots were not tortured by conscience more shrewdly than *Thérèse*, niece of a small Parisian shopkeeper, and her lover (and second husband), *Laurent*, after the murder of the first husband, *Camille*. Like the ghost of Banquo, *Camille's* form is never far away—in the terror of the wedding night, in the ensuing months of misery, and in the ultimate anguish when old *Madame Raquin*, the lovers in her grip, speaks at last from her paralytic's chair. The play has none of the exaltation of high tragedy, but it is a sustained and successful attack on the nerves. Mr. TYRONE GUTHRIE's production, and the acting of the Old Vic company, see to it that we escape no turn of the screw.

Miss ROBSON's low-pitched *Thérèse*, at her best in the black despair of the close, haunts our minds as *Camille* haunts his murderers—a performance of imaginative mastery which makes us realize what the London stage has lost by this player's absence.

Mr. MICHAEL GOLDEN's *Laurent*, looking like a figure from a canvas of Manet, hardly rises to his partner's challenge. However, Miss VIOLET FAREBROTHER's *Madame Raquin*, until then an amiable old woman, well sustains the theatrical horror of the fourth act.

The members of the domino-playing chorus, Mr. O. B. CLARENCE's precise *Grivet* and Mr. FRANK PETLEY's *Michaud*, are thoroughly in character, and Miss KAY BANNERMAN is a charming chatterbox as *Suzanne*. Mr. GUTHRIE, producing for the Old Vic and C.E.M.A., takes us into the heart of the *Raquin* household, though now and then he might with advantage lift the blanket of the dark. J. C. T.



THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE

Dot Hawkins Miss PHYLLIS ROBINS
Bill Fish Mr. LUPINO LANE

presence as a musical-comedy Hippolyta who goes everywhere with a band of eight "Glamazons"; and Mr. LAURI LUPINO LANE and Mr. WALLACE LUPINO are in the family tradition as *Dot's* brother, given to shadow-boxing, and her Pimlico father. Mr. LANE and Mr. LAURI WYLIE have based the piece on an idea by H. F. MALBY. Some of the dialogue is by Mr. TED KAVANAGH, of "Itma," and, indeed, there are times when *Bill Fish* and Mr. Tommy Handley can greet each other with a colleague's salute.

J. C. T.

"GUILTY" (LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

THE reopening of Sir Nigel Playfair's famous theatre at Hammersmith, and

No Choice

FEELING like one of those favoured journalists to whom Stalin has especially revealed sidelights on the situation and to whom Goebbels has in an expansive moment exposed the trend of affairs, I pushed the revolving doors.

The smell of upholstery and boiled greens, the drab and stuffy pomp of the hotel trappings passed unnoticed, for I was visualizing a shop-window filled with copies of the new book I would write. A window it would be in a fashionable bookseller's, snappily dressed in black velvet tiers, on which volumes of my work would rest at all angles. Some half-opened, some closed, some propped against a pile of others, some built into cubes like children's blocks. What should I call it? *African Adventure?* *Information from India?* *European Experience?* *Somewhere Explained?* *Somewhere Else Exposed?* *Inside, Outside, Upside-down Everywhere Else?* The titles were getting used up.

I wondered if she'd think it odd if I took notes.

For I had arranged to meet an old acquaintance newly returned to England after five years' absence. It would be fascinating to hear what she had to say.

When the first greetings were over and we had exclaimed at the little change in each other's appearance and inquired about any of each other's children whose names we could recall, I expected a flood of adventures. I fingered my fountain-pen.

The voyage, for instance—dashing dangerously through mounting waves between submarine and mine. The perils of the deep. . . .

"Well, there wasn't time to bother much, you see the children got mumps in mid-ocean."

She seemed already to have forgotten the outer world. All she cared for was her impressions of the new London into which she was plunged. The prospects of my book faded. It would have to be a strong article.

Had she, I asked, been impressed most by the bomb-holes, the guns, the balloons?

"Are there *no* penny fares on the buses?" she rejoined sadly.

All the strange uniforms in the streets, I persisted—the gas-cleansing stations, the black-out?

"The butcher wasn't very polite," she said. "He seemed to think it was kind of him to give me two kidneys."

Wasn't she astonished at the sand



bags, the barbed wire? Surprised by the jeeps, trucks and tanks bowling down Piccadilly?

"It is so tiresome," she said. "There is no choice. The woman in the shoe department considered me fussy to refuse black boot-laces when I had asked for brown. And there was only fudge at the sweet counter. Nothing else."

Before I had time to gasp she went on.

"The house-agent as a favour let me into the secret that there was one vacancy in a co-educational school for backward illegitimate children, and when I asked about flats they said that if I came in a month's time they might put me on the waiting list. And lip-stick and lemonade appear to be on a pool system. Only I did think that you could choose your points, but the

grocer said didn't I know that it was split-pea week when I asked for lentils. And just, I ask you, look at this elastic. Pink. I wanted white for—"

"ELASTIC!!" I shouted. "Did you say elastic?"

I dropped my fork and sprang up. This was no time for ceremony.

"Where did you get it?" I said firmly, dragging on my coat as I stood over her.

"There was a man outside Harridges. Of course I don't usually buy things from . . ."

I snatched up my bag and called over my shoulder as I ran: "Sorry to go like this—no choice. . . ."

By luck there was a taxi outside being paid off by an American soldier. "Harridges, please!" I said.



"Where's that half-smoked cigarette that I petulantly stub out in the third act?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Russia and Britain

MR. EDWARD CRANKSHAW's account of the relations between *Russia and Britain* (COLLINS, 8/6) is not one of those undistinguished books, produced to meet a current demand, of which there are a good many at present. Based on a knowledge of the Russian language and a wide acquaintance with Russia during the present war, it is written with a detachment which greatly increases the effect of the author's admiration and affection for the Russian people. The book opens with Sir Hugh Willoughby's attempt in 1553 to open up trade with China through the seas to the north of Russia. Two of three ships, including Sir Hugh Willoughby's, were lost, but the third, under Richard Chancellor, reached Archangel. Accompanied by "amiable but moody 'barbarians' whose language they could not speak," Chancellor and his companions traversed the hundreds of miles of frozen marsh and forest between Archangel and Moscow, and were received by Ivan the Terrible with a barbaric splendour which pleased without at all intimidating Chancellor. Ivan, who had recently quarrelled with the Hanseatic merchants, looked upon the English traders as heaven-sent. But his interest in England soon extended beyond commerce. He wanted an alliance, and sympathy for all his troubles, personal and political; and when his proposals of marriage (made while his fifth wife was still alive), first to Queen Elizabeth and then to Lady Mary Hastings, fell through it needed all the tact and firmness of the redoubtable English emissaries to his court to preserve the commercial privileges accorded them, or even their own heads. In this clash between the limited, practical, tenacious and emotionally unresponsive English traders and diplomats and the ardent, idealistic, prodigally polygamous and frequently homicidal Tsar, Mr. CRANKSHAW sees an extreme example of the always recurring inability of the English and Russians to adjust themselves to one another. At present, he says, the English are overdoing their admiration for Russia—"From a cannibal she has become a Lohengrin of the Steppes,

and all in twenty-five years!" What is needed is a calm attempt on both sides at mutual understanding, and he ends with a hope that Russian writers who know something of the British will be allowed to interpret them sympathetically to their fellow-countrymen. "Their public is waiting and eager." He hopes, too, that when the war is over Russians will be free to travel to Great Britain and Englishmen eager to explore Russia, Russia shedding her native suspiciousness and England her traditional insularity.

H. K.

Anything to Oblige

One has only to compare *The Valley of Decision* (COLLINS, 12/6) with, say, *The Forsyte Saga* to realize how adversely the technique of the film has affected the family chronicle. Not for Mrs. MARCIA DAVENPORT the delicate psychological scaffolding that went to the erection of a Galsworthy climax. Her characters are comparatively standardized, and the situations in which they find themselves flare up with the frequency and unexpectedness of melodrama. She has staked her long book's integrity on the figure of an Irish maid-servant who enters the household of a Pitts-burgh ironmaster in 1873 and is still its prop and stay in 1941. In the interval *Mary* has refused to marry the son of the house, on the ground that the mill and its social interests come first, but responded with abandonment to his extra-matrimonial advances—an odd display of ethics for a girl described as pre-eminently devout. She finally marries off her lover to a suitable wife, and when the suitable wife proves inefficient takes on the house-keeping herself. A comprehensive cast includes an English lordling who says "How?" when he means "What?" and a stage crowd of heroic Czechs and bestial Germans, the former providing a violinist husband for the great-granddaughter of the original ironmaster.

H. F. E.

Russian Interpreter

Delays about Trade Agreements, delays about Military Missions, about release of ships, or envoys' credentials, or about any other aggravating matter at issue, coupled with slights, sneers and misunderstandings—unintentional or sometime; not quite so unintentional, all combined to make it a matter of no surprise to his friends that the Russian ambassador, after eight years' service in London, should declare that the one thing he had learnt was to be very patient with the British. Even Mr. GEORGE BILAINKIN, however, would hardly deny that there were points on both sides, and actually most of the difficulties were stimulated even if not originated in Berlin. In his biographical study—*Maisky* (ALLEN AND UNWIN, 15/-)—he has chapter and verse to make good his claim that to his hero's dexterity and to his real goodwill toward this country, perhaps more than to any other factor except the madness of the German leader, do we owe our present triumphant and enduring full alliance with Russia. Unfortunately this volume tells little about the man himself. The most personal note is to the effect that he sits at a table empty of accumulating files of papers behind a battery of twelve well-sharpened pencils. He speaks good English and has the quality, rare in a diplomat, of avoiding vague generalities when he talks. His adventurous early life—St. Petersburg, Siberia, Geneva, Camden Town—is dismissed in a line or two. On the other hand the writer produces a story of Anglo-Soviet relations through all the ebb and flow of crucial years that is illuminating and stimulating even if partly because it is edged with criticism not wholly free from bias.

C. C. P.

Behind the Lines

MISS MARJORY ALLINGHAM'S *The Oaken Heart* remains our best picture of a country hostess's war-days, but Miss EDITH OLIVIER'S *Night Thoughts of a Country Landlady* (BATSFORD, 12/6) has its points as a runner-up. *Miss Emma Nightingale's* diary, handed in (we are told) as salvage, exhibits the benevolent, "sensible," slightly snobbish point of view of an elderly lady who adorns one of those characteristic English villages where townsfolk are condemned if they try to buy the cottages, and the cottages are condemned if the cottagers try to live in them themselves. To this already over-populated haven arrive children, mothers (expectant and non-expectant), bombed-out *rentiers* and various sections of the armed forces. *Miss Nightingale* gallantly puts up her quota; and her nocturnal comments on their diurnal habits are reinforced by Mr. REX WHISTLER'S clever illustrations. An element of caricature in the latter gratefully atones for a certain patriotic restraint in the text. One feels that *Miss Nightingale's* handling of her lodgers was almost too good to be true; although these were the early days of the war when food and domestic service were adequate. The happiest chapter of the book contains the account of an escape from Brittany by an English girl who drove a Polish ambulance in 1940.

H. P. E.

Shelley's Friend

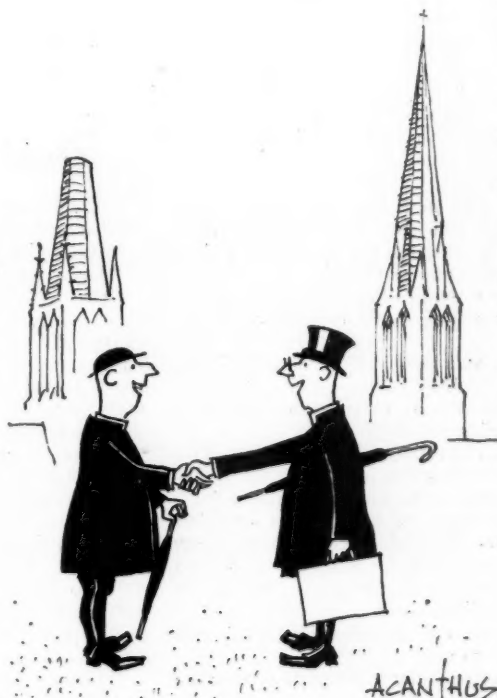
The productions of the Golden Cockerel Press are well known to bibliophiles, but even persons who are concerned with the contents rather than the appearance of books will turn with delight from the ordinary drab war-time production to this beautifully printed volume, with its spacious and leisurely title (*The Athenians. Being Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson Hogg and his Friends Thomas Love Peacock, Leigh Hunt, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Others. Edited by WALTER SIDNEY SCOTT. Printed, for the first time, by THE GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS. Four guineas*). Apart from its appeal to the eye, this book enlarges our knowledge of the character and circumstances of Shelley's most intimate friend. Its title, the editor explains, "owes its origin to the great love of Greek culture manifested in their correspondence by nearly all the writers," but it is the early letters, written before Hogg knew Peacock, Leigh Hunt and Landor, which give the book its liveliest interest. Hogg and Shelley met at Oxford, when they were both eighteen, and were expelled together as the suspected authors of a pamphlet entitled "The Necessity of Atheism." Shelley then tried to arrange a marriage between his sister Elizabeth and Hogg, and Hogg, who had never met Elizabeth, wrote to her that if it could be inscribed on his grave that he had gleaned some scattered smiles from her, "the moon and stars, as the Howlet glided through the cloudless sky, would shine with unusual lustre when they viewed a spot consecrated by such an inscription." Hogg's family were dismayed by his atheism and even by the vegetarianism which, under pressure from Shelley, he had temporarily adopted, and Hogg's mother having failed to break Shelley's spell, a clerical friend intervened. "You will do yourself very severe mischief," he wrote, alluding to measures which Hogg's father was contemplating to bring his son to reason. In his introduction the editor writes "I am aware that my opinion of Hogg, his character and capabilities, is not that usually held: I can only say that it has been formed from my knowledge of his life and work, based upon literary and other remains not so far looked upon by any eyes save those of his family." It will be interesting to examine this

fresh evidence when it is published. Hogg made love to both of Shelley's wives, and married Shelley's last love, Jane Williams. This was certainly identifying himself with his friend, but in a fashion which it will require evidence of a very extraordinary kind to render pleasing to most tastes.

H. K.

American on the Verge

It is some compensation for losing one's figure and hair that life grows every year more interesting. Even *Romeo* would have been reconciled to it if he had not been rash. Besides, the subject of early middle-age offers a good novelist his best opportunities. Mr. JOHN P. MARQUAND has quite cast off the occasional tedium of earlier stories now that he has devoted *So Little Time* (ROBERT HALE, 10/6) to a man who has had time to look about him. *Wilson* is a cultivated American who tinkers about with other men's plays and knows it is now too late to write his own. Yet this, in the year before Pearl Harbour, is the least of *Wilson's* cares: one accepts one's limitations as one no longer underrates one's gifts. Worrying about Europe, restless because he was in the last war and he feels he should be in this, but rather unhappy to think his son may be involved in it, *Wilson* finds himself examining his youth in a small town, the marriage he did not make and the one he did, his moderately successful career, and the changing world about him. It is the nicest imaginable statement of an interesting state of mind, and it brings in, quite naturally, some benign if disillusioned sketches of one of those international "observers" who have cornered the Press in our ten troubled years, of stage people and Hollywood people, of "literary" society, and of the unimportant persons (who remain more real to him than any he meets later) with whom a man grows up in a small town. J. S.





*"... Spam and fried chips
Say the B.B.C. pips."*

Quid Pro Quo

"NO, old boy, it wasn't quite like that. I'd actually been through E.F.T.S. and S.F.T.S. and got as far as O.T.U."

"You skipped I.T.W., I suppose, because you were originally in the V.R."

"That's right. Then at O.T.U. the M.O. decided I was u/s."

"What on earth are you two jabbering about?"

"We're talking shop, grandma. You wouldn't understand."

"Don't make obvious remarks."

"Would you like me to explain? You see, E.F.T.S. is Elementary Flying Training School. S.F.T.S. is Service Flying Training School. O.T.U. is Operational—"

"That doesn't help at all. It's still Greek to me."

"Sorry, granny. Shall we go into the other room?"

"No. I see little enough of you when you're on holiday as it is."

"Leave, grandma."

"Leave what?"

"Oh, nothing. Skip it. . . . As I was saying, Bernard, I came unstuck at O.T.U. I was a bit cheesed at having got so far, so I asked to see the C.I. and he wheeled me in to the C.O."

"Bit unusual, that, wasn't it?"

"Most. Anyway, as luck would have it the A.O.C. was there that day and the C.O. actually put my case before him."

"Good Lord! Was it the A.O.C. or the A.O.C. in C?"

"The A.O.C."

"I see."

"I just don't believe it! There couldn't be any sense in that!"

"There is, grandma. The A.O.C. is the Air Officer Commanding and the

A.O.C. in C. is the Air Officer Commanding in Chief. Well, as I say, the A.O.C. was there and proved to be a charming old boy. He said he'd take it up personally with the S.M.O. at Group and see if there was any hope."

"And was there?"

"Unfortunately no. I was given a C.M.B., found to be quite u/s, collected a 657, went back to the unit and looked up A.M.O.s, underwent a sort of T.T.B., and am now awaiting a course as an L.T.I. at C.L.T.S."

"You've made me drop a stitch!"

"Bad luck, granny. Can I help?"

"Yes, you can. Read this bit from the pattern; I can't find my glasses."

"O.K. Let's see. 'Cast on 4 sts., p.1 (k.1, p.1) 3 times, sl.1, k.1, p.s.s.o., p.1 (k.1, p.1) 8 times, k. 2 tog., p.1, (k.1, p.1) 3 times.' Great Scott! does that really mean something to you?"

"Of course, you stupid boy! . . ."

Open House

I DUMPED my kit in the darkened hall and passed through the length of the house into the sunshine. Half a dozen soldiers sprawled on the terrace asleep. Beyond, on the hard courts, four more were playing tennis; that is, they had rackets in their hands, but the dun-coloured ball lay in the folds of the half-tautened net, pending the settlement of a discussion. I walked over.

"You can't 'ave forty-fifteen, not serving from that side!"

"It's dooce!"

"Look 'ere! Ginger 'ad first serve—"

"'Oo's asking 'oo served first? It's the score in this game we're talking about, ain't it? I say it's dooce, because if it was forty-fifteen—"

"Oh, 'ell, it's too 'ot, anyway. What say we chuck it?"

"Okay."

"Okay."

"Okay."

They threw their rackets down.

"What's the court like?" I asked Ginger as they came off. He had dropped behind the other three.

"Not bad, Corp. Gettin' a bit churned up. Ever played?"

"A bit."

He wiped his freckled forehead with an unclean handkerchief, then nodded towards the big old house.

"Whatjer think of the billet?"

I explained that I had only just arrived, and asked him how many were billeted there.

"About twenty-five," he said. "Not bad, as billets go. Darby an' Joan have a couple of rooms up the top somewhere."

"Who do?"

"The old freaks it belongs to. Darby's as bald as an egg, an' Joan 'as her hair done up in a sort of cake. They're not bad."

"Been here long?"

Ginger said he supposed about a hundred and fifty years.

"No, I mean the chaps."

"Oh, no. Only come in Tuesday. Darby starts creating about our boots on the parky floor, or something, so we keeps outside mostly. Like me to show yer round? It ain't bad. There's a billiard room, but the cloth's got tore. Look at that. That's a bird-table. The old girl puts bits of bacon on it, an' we have to go past quiet in case we scare the ruddy sparrers."

We climbed the steps on to the terrace and went into the shade of the house.

"It's all right to smoke," said Ginger. "'Appen to have a fag on yer?"

I said No, I had been meaning to get some.

"I'll get some," said Ginger—"hang on a minute."

He disappeared stealthily through the door on the left and reappeared almost at once holding two cigarettes in his fingers.

"There's a box stuck at the back of a desk-affair in there," he explained.

"Only don't let on, because only me an' my mate knows about it. There was some stinkin' awful cigars in there too when we come, but the old geezer moved 'em sometime on Wednesday."

He paused under a picture in the hall.

"That's the old girl," he confided hoarsely—"painted by oils, or something. Done in 'er youth . . . about ninety year ago, I sh'd think. See what I mean, about the quaffure?"

I nodded. The hair-style certainly was rather cake-like.

"Got a son in the Army, she has—called Aubrey. Bet 'e ain't 'alf an Aubrey too. There's some pictures of him she showed us last night in the tunnel, in a short coat an' top 'at. Smashin'."

"In the tunnel?"

"Had Jerry over last night. Pops over every now an' again in these parts. They got a sorter tunnel through to some property on the other side of the garden. Use it instead of an Anderson."

We were going up the broad curving staircase now.

"Mind yer boots on the varnish," said Ginger, "else old man Darby'll start creating. These is smashin' banisters to slide down, only the old buzzard cops Tiny Wheeler whizzin' down 'em first night we was here 'an got 'im torn a strip off."

"Too bad," I said. "I like sliding down banisters."

"All these is our rooms," said Ginger proprietorially, as we gained the landing—"beds in there, beds in there, an' beds in there. But you'll be up top, I expect, being a corporal. I think there's a spare bed in the room Sarge Busby an' Corp. Rigby shares. Come on."

We climbed the last flight of stairs. Ginger dropped his voice.

"You'll 'ave to be as quiet as a ruddy mouse, livin' up 'ere, because you're right bang next door to the old trouts. The C.O. tried to get 'em to shift out altogether so's we could play the accordion and 'ave a sing-song, but they turned stunt—"

"Turned what?"

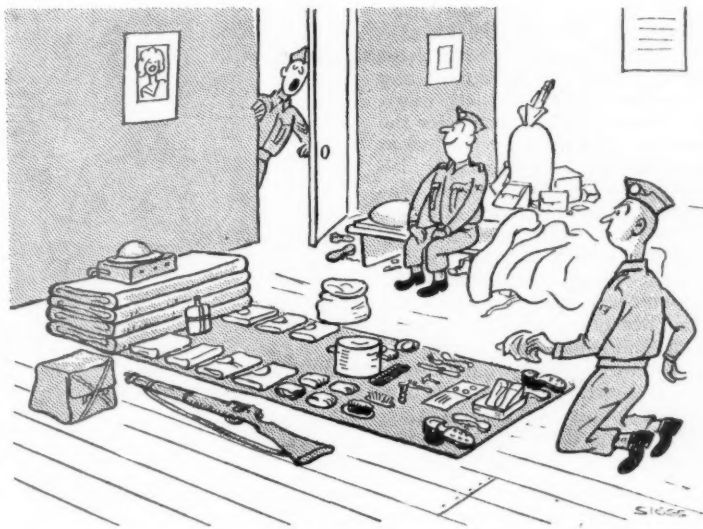
"Sh! Turned stunt—you know, stubborn; dug their blinkin' 'eels in an' wouldn't 'op it. Trouble is with old people—"

Ginger stopped. A door had opened, and in the flood of sunlight there appeared a silhouette. It was familiarly cake-shaped at the top.

"Oh!" said the voice; and then, very evenly, "Why, come in, dear!"

I asked Ginger to excuse me. After all, I hadn't been home for four years.

J. B. B.



"Kit inspection has been cancelled."

Lady Addle's Domestic Front

Bengers, Herts, 1944

MY DEAR, DEAR READERS,
—Last week I wrote of entrées—those tempting little dishes which can so often be constructed from “left-overs.” This week therefore I must say a few words about the mother of all war-time entrées—the Salvage Campaign.

It behoves both high and low to contribute to Salvage. And the nobility have not shirked their share, however unpleasant it may be. I have one friend, who it would be indiscreet to mention by name, for royal blood flows through her veins, who faints regularly every time she lifts a dust-bin lid. But does this deter her? On the contrary, she has had all her little personal pots, for face cream, powder, bath essence and so forth, specially modelled, at considerable expense, in silver, in the shape of dust-bins, so as to accustom her to her ordeal. Her maid told mine that she now frequently faints when powdering her nose.

Another friend, the Duchess of Strewh (mother of Gugglie Gore-Blymigh, whom I have mentioned earlier), who was entirely engrossed before the war in social work among lift-girls, has now switched all her energies to the rescue of bones instead, and has so far a salvation list of well over a thousand—a considerably better result than she achieved with her former work.

Perhaps the noblest job of all, though—because it has been the most thankless—has fallen to the lot of a cousin of my husband's, Henrietta McClutch (Cousin Hen-Pen as my children affectionately call her), whose whole life was smashed soon after the war started, poor dear, by the loss of her brother's pack of hounds, which were dispersed for the duration. But she found, as others have found before her, that hard work was the only anodyne for sorrow, and she did a magnificent job in her county by going round with the hound-van and collecting nearly 2½ tons of dogs' hair. When she had reached the second ton, and had sewn up every hair herself in pretty ½-cwt. chintz sacks, the Ministry of Supply told her that they had never appealed for dogs' hair, and had no use for it. It was a crushing

blow. She had to unpick every stitch and send just the sacks, which the Ministry said they wanted. It is just the kind of Government muddle which one expects but which is so disheartening to people who are endeavouring to help their country.

As for our village, we have, through our Save and Serve League of which I am proud to be president, not only done our duty but thoroughly enjoyed ourselves doing it. We have organized rubber hunts in the woods, hairpin drives in the village streets, hip-and-haw picnics and sloe outings. We have also adopted a poor unwanted pig, whose mother had died and whose father was unknown.

Then at our last Salvage Week I organized a mile of buttons, and sat at the receipt of custom myself, having first sent out a circular letter urging people to sacrifice one bone button off every coat and waistcoat of their husband's. I pointed out that a man will not starve or die of cold if he is short of one button, and I led the way by collecting from Addle's wardrobe thirty-one beautiful buttons with which I started my mile. But I must confess that the villagers were not very forthcoming with their contributions. They said their husbands made a fuss—so

like men! I dare say Addle will be annoyed when he finds out, but the Salvage drive only took place last September and he has hardly had time to notice the deficiency as yet. He is, I have thought once or twice lately, getting a trifle inobservant with middle age. He even forgot his eightieth birthday last year!

But paper is the salvage need which I feel most acutely. Indeed, I think the word “paper” will be found graven on my heart when I die, as “Calais” was on poor Mary's. (A distant cousin of my mother's family.) I frequently write long letters to my friends calling for replies, so as to add the answering epistles to my paper sack. I am also trying very hard to make my dear Mipsie part with some of the trunk-loads of letters which she has had during her life, letters from the highest in the land, expressing their admiration and devotion to my beautiful sister. But so far I have had no success. “My love-letters are my capital, Blanche,” she says, smiling her roguish smile. “There is many a letter in that trunk that is better than a five-pound note. You never know when a poor man will come into a fortune and you can never be sure when an old letter will produce a dividend.” Dear Mipsie. Friendship has always meant much to her, and it is like her to think of her letters as so many treasures.

But to return to salvage. We had a most thrilling talk at the Bengers Hall not long ago, from a Government speaker, who told us several very interesting facts. For instance, I think it was sixty tons of paper that would, when pulped, make one anti-tank gun. Or am I thinking of bones? He also said that if everyone were to preserve just the newspaper they read each day and send it to salvage it would, in some wonderful way, save the shipping space needed for importing glue for aeroplane wings. And if everyone were to produce just one old umbrella frame it would mean so many tons—I forget the exact figure—of non-ferrous metal for land mines each year. These may seem like dry statistics, but they must be taken seriously, for they are the life-blood of our country.

M. D.



“I've just received my calling-down papers.”

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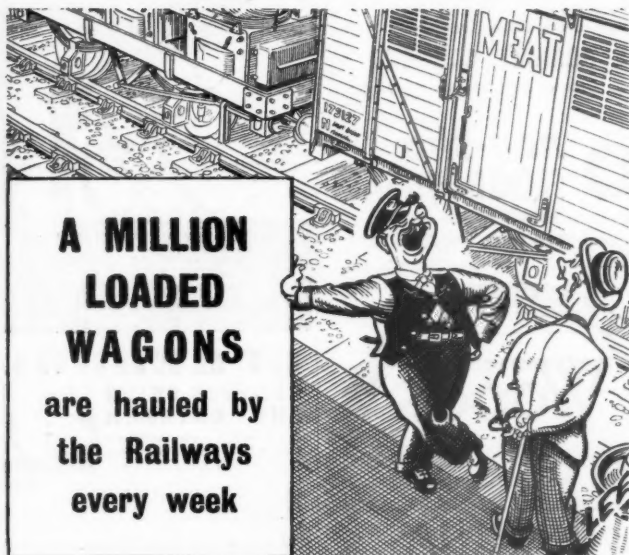
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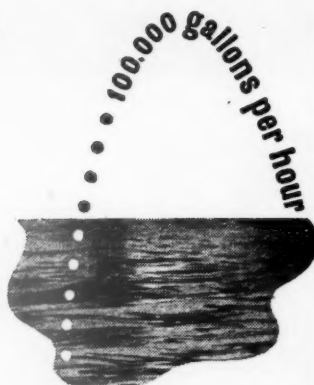
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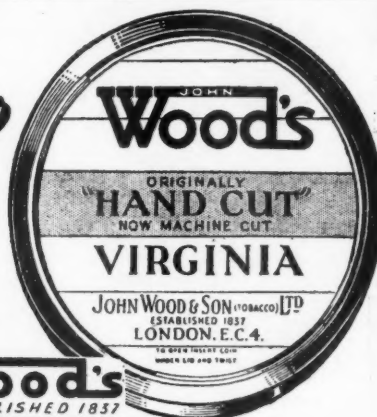
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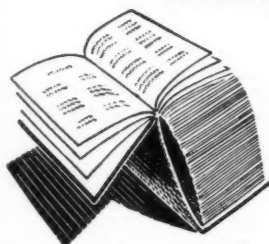
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[The original letter can be inspected.]

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